The Sunday Tribune's News and Reviews of Books and Authors

Some Recent Fiction

By Isabel Paterson

OVINGTON'S BANK. By Stanley J. Weyman. Longmans.
OVERLOOKED. By Maurice Baring. Houghton, Mifflin.
NO. 13 TORONI. By Julius Regis. Holt.
THE MYSTERY OF THE HIDDEN ROOM. By Marion Harvey. Clode.
THE MYSTERIOUS OFFICE. By Jennette Lee. Scribner's.

TO OWN that one recalls, however dimly, the time when Stanley J. Weyman was a "best seller" is rather a damaging admission. However, ten years is a generation in literature, and twenty is as a cycle of Cathay. And then Mr. Weyman is not so hard to remember as some. He has never quite dropped out of the running. He is just a little out of style, that is all; he has become a staple instead of a novelty.

Well, to be a novelty demands nothing but newness; to be a staple requires substantial quality. Mr. Weyman always did have more of that than he got credit for. He became distinguished as a rather light romancer; but he had ever a solid basis of realism, a sense of both character and environment as it affected character, so that his plots had some relation to both those factors. Now the gilt is off the gingerbread, it is easy to realize what good molasses goes to the making of it, even if it be not nectar and ambrosia. His latest book, "Ovington's Bank," is a worthy example. One perceives that he turns to the past for material, because there he finds the roots of the present. This novel, dated 100 years ago in time, ties up substantially with the life of to-day. It shows the beginnings of the age of finance and of rapid transit, and its titular hero is a self-made man.

The bank in question is a commercial institution. But banking was not then the solidly respectable vocation it now is. Putting your money in a bank was regarded as something of a sporting proposition; double or quits, according to the ability and honesty of the banker. It was a part of the great speculative and industrial movement that came after the end of the Napoleonic wars. Hence old Squire Griffin not only mistrusted banks but despised bankers. His fortune was in land, and he increased it by the simple expedient of "stealing the common from the goose"; that is to say, enclosing the village green, like many another fine old English gentleman of his period. Gains made by trade or finance were low.

When the squire's nephew and possible heir, Arthur Bourdillon, insisted on becoming a junior in Ovington's, with prospects of a partnership, the dear old man nearly had apoplexy. He forbade his daughter Josina ever again to look on the youth with favor. Josina timidly assented. Her father had always bullied her within an inch of her life. And, then, she was in love with young Clement Ovington.

Clement in turn was a disappointment to his father. He actually preferred puttering about on the land better than piling up golden guineas behind a counter. Ingratitude was rampant all round. The younger generation was getting out of bounds, as usual. Why must people be young? A sheer waste of time.

From thence Mr. Weyman might have proceeded by time-honored methods to a purely conventional pairing off, in the old three-decker style, which "left the lovers kissing in couples on the decks; left the villian baffled and the parents signing checks." And he has some of the old-fashioned devices of plot; but not all those devices were despicable. People don't reform nor change their whole natures suddenly; but they do bend or break under pressure of circumstances. We all come to our porridge oftener than we like to admit. Squire Griffin had to, and so did John Ovington. What broke the squire was to learn that aristocratic blood did not save his nephew, Arthur, from being a thief and a forger. And Ovington lost some of his self-assurance during a run on the bank. So the ending of the story is not unalloyed happiness, no more than life is. And if it is a little stodgy at times, why, so is life. It is not, in any event, saccharine; but more like roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, a solid slice of the past served hot. One can easily believe that the descendants of Clement and Josina are alive right now, the most crusted Tories in their county, writing indignant letters weekly to "The Times" about the impudence of the new rich.

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The element of novelty constitutes the chief interest in Maurice Baring's little novel, "Overlooked." It is an experiment in form, with elements of danger for novelists, as a whole, for it reveals them as something less than infallible. Not meaning Mr. Baring himself; but he has shown herein how a novelist gets his material, and what he does with it, and leaves you wondering if that is as near as any of them ever come to the facts of the case. It is a double-barreled story. First you are introduced to the characters and the setting as they are—no, not seen, but anyhow understood by Anthony Kay!

Kay is blind. He is taking the cure at a French watering place. Because of his misfortune people talk to him rather freely. James Rudd, the novelist, discusses with him the fictional possibilities of the various other guests at the cure, and their stories as he glimpses them through scrappy bits of information they let fall. All this Kay sets down. Following this introduction is the story as written by Rudd. And then there is an epilogue showing how far off Rudd was in his solution. It goes Henry James one better. Only a very simple plot could be treated in this manner; and such this is. And as the illusion is deliberately destroyed, one must get one's pleasure from the author's finesse. It would probably be caviare to the general, but amusing to authors—unless the portrait of James Rudd hit them too shrewdly. The implication is that as between him and Kay the blind man sees clearest.

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Should you expect a Swedish detective story to be different from any other kind? Or is the detective story truly international? It began in France, didn't it, and was brought to its highest or most popular development in England? Surely there is no question that Sherlock Holmes is the greatest of all detectives still. Anyhow, "No. 13 Toron" is international in one way.

The action commences in Sweden, but leaps immediately across the Atlantic, even across the United States, and most of the action occurs around Puget Sound and points north. Julius Regis must have sailed those waters. There are a lot of Scandinavians to be found thereabouts manning American coastwise vessels; officers, I mean. I think they are better at that than at detective stories. This is just fair to middling.

It doesn't seem reasonable, for example, that two men could swim after a yacht, climb aboard unseen and remain in hiding for a couple of days in the restricted space a yacht affords. Listening, too, with their heads projecting from the canvas cover of the lifeboat or dinghy swung alongside, and successfully raiding the galley. But if such a thing could be done, or if you are willing to allow it could be done, it's a fine exciting predicament.

Perhaps a Swede, being blond, would enjoy a low state of visibility, and two Swedes naturally would be even less visible. The yacht, by the way, was after $1,000,000 in gold that was lost when a boat from the Klondike went down. And it had on board a lovely kidnapped lady. The elements of a good thriller are there all right. Moreover, it is educational. One learns how to say "I love you" in Swedish. "Jag alskar dig" is the way it goes. Would you ever have guessed it?

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"The Mystery of the Hidden Room" is purely a native product. It unfolds itself on Riverside Drive; the exact location may be determined by any one having curiosity and the taxi fare, for the house containing the hidden room was twenty minutes by motor—driving as fast as the speed laws allow, if not faster—from West Seventy-second Street. The house also was an old one remodeled, and standing in "vast grounds," so you will readily grasp this was no sordid affair concerning persons of the lower social strata.

Where, then, was Philip Darwin, the master of the house, shot? In the first chapter—yes, yes, of course, but in which room? The library? No. By a process of elimination, only the study remains. Right.

Was his young and lovely wife, who a moment after the shot rang out was discovered holding the smoking revolver in her hand, was she the guilty party? Impossible. Graydon McKelvie, the great detective, lays down the rule in such cases. She was innocent because the evidence against her was too overwhelming to be convincing.

Then could it be the dead man's secretary, the spiteful Orton? No, because he is the first one against whom the reader's suspicion is directed. How about his nephew, Lee Darwin? He also is ruled out; he had quarreled violently with his uncle the day before, and, moreover, his footprints were discovered under the study window. Therefore he did not do it. Was it, then, the young wife's brother? He had a strong motive—so that clears him.

The plot thickens, does it not? It does. Toward the last it is what you might call pretty thick. Well, who wants a wishy-washy, watery detective story? The thicker the better, till it stands up by the sheer weight of its improbability. This one does. The style is classical. There is a manservant named Jenkins; and if that is not classical enough, surely the phrase "Stygian darkness" is.

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But a detective story without any murder, without even a half-hearted villain in it—well, it may be "in an original vein," as the book jacket claims for "The Mysterious Office," but it isn't what I call a proper detective story at all. A little more blood and thunder, please, and serve hotter. And such a good chance for a murder, cynically speaking; for every one in this story is just too good to live. Twenty-five thousand dollars had disappeared from the desk of John eGary. Only four persons had access to the room, all of them Geary's trusted employees. Three of them confessed to the theft, out of sheer good-heartedness, to shield the others. And then it turned out not to have been stolen at all. It was simply carried off airily by Geary's daughter, who thought papa meant her to have it, and must know that no one else would take what didn't belong to them. Probably the idiot child inherited her stupidity from a father who would walk out of his office leaving $25,000 in cash lying around loose; but one loses patience with such a family. One does not feel even bound to respect the conventions by not revealing the plot, for there it is in all its feebleness. In case the book was really meant for children, an apology is herewith tendered for what in that case is undue severity. But detective stories for children are so rare.

The Ten Best Sellers

The following books are reported by Brentano's as having the best sale during the past week:

FICTION

"Three Lovers," by Frank Swinnerton (Doran). An English Cinderella of to-day has to make her choice among three Princes.

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"Fair Harbor," by Joseph C. Lincoln (Appleton). A Cape Cod comedy.

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"Tales of the Jazz Age," by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Scribner). Short stories, mostly about the flapper.

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"Babbitt," by Sinclair Lewis (Harcourt). A knock for the booster.

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"Command," by William McFee (Doubleday, Page). An exposition of the romantic possibilities of a very commonplace man.

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"The Boy Grew Older," by Heywood Broun (Putnam). The story of a father's love for his son.

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"The Cathedral," by Hugh Walpole (Doran). A critical study of formalized religion in its effects upon various human lives.

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"Swallowed Up," by Mrs. Wilson Woodrow (Brentano). A lively mystery tale.

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"England, My England," by D. H. Lawrence (Seltzer). A collection of searching and sometimes morbidly analytical long short stories.

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"The Bright Shawl," by Joseph Hergesheimer (Knopf). A vivid tragedy of love and patriotism in Cuba in the eighties.

NON-FICTION

"Letters of Franklin K. Lane," (Houghton, Mifflin). The revelation of a kindly and sincere personality.

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"Life and Letters of Walter H. Page" (Doubleday, Page). Memoirs of the late American Ambassador to the Court of St. James, who was also a noted author and publisher.

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"Short History of the World," by H. G. Wells (Macmillan). An abridged edition of the "Outline of History."

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"Love Conquers All," by Robert T. Benchley (Holt). Amusing light sketches of contemporary foibles.

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"Shouts and Murmurs," by Alexander Woollcott (Century). Sidelights on the drama, by a competent critic.

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"Tramping on Life," by Harry Kemp (Boni & Liveright). An extremely candid autobiography of the "hobo poet."

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"Disenchantment," by C. E. Montague (Brentano). Disillusioned reflections on the war and the peace

Shop Talk

On the same day that **MISS WINIFRED HOLT** was married to **RUFUS GRAVES MATHER**, this month, her new book, "The Light Which Cannot Fail," was published. Miss Holt is internationally famous for her philanthropic work for the blind, and the book is meant to give a clearer understanding to other workers of what the blind need. The book contains many anecdotes to illustrate the author's meaning; and has an introductory letter by the late **VISCOUNT BRYCE** and an appreciation by **JOSEPH REINACH**.

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ALLEN SINCLAIR WILL, who has just completed an authoritative two volume life of the late Cardinal Gibbons, was for a number of years city editor of "The Baltimore Sun," and for an even longer period was a personal friend of the Cardinal. Before his death, Cardinal Gibbons opened to Mr. Will the archives of the diocese of Baltimore and allowed him to read his private journal, begun in 1868, from which extracts are given.

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DJEMAL PASHA, author of "Memories of a Turkish Statesman," barely finished writing his reminiscences in time. He was assassinated last summer, by political enemies.

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Books for boys are not always written with such care as **FRANCIS ROLT WHEELER** gives to his. Research for his last two, "Heroes of the Ruins" and "The Coming of the Peoples," took him to the British Museum, the Bibliotheque Nationale, and to Spain. Mr. Wheeler says he spends most of his literary profits securing material for more books.

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"Babbitt" is going to be published in the famous Tauchnitz Library, which will make it easily available all over Europe.

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PHILIP CURTISS, author of "Mummers in Mufti," has just returned from a year in Spain, during which he studied the condition of Spanish literature in the present day. He says that in Spain a new novel is hawked on the streets like an "extra," and each appearance of a favorite author's books is an event. However, the sale is naturally more limited than in America, and the new novels are always published in paper covers, screamingly litographed, and usually on cheap paper. The competition must be intense. Mr. Curtiss says that in Spain almost every educated man writes a book sooner or later. Or if not a book, then a playlet, for one act plays are popular in Spain. Realism is the vogue, and much good work is printed and forgotten in the daily papers.

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The Poetry Society of America has awarded **EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON** its prize for the best books of poems of 1922 for his "Collected Poems."

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CLEMENCE DANE is expected in America soon, not for a lecture tour, but to see the rehearsals of a play of hers.

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The youngest English author, **ALEC WAUGH**, may give English fiction a new slant. He announces that it is his ambition to write the novel of big business, as he thinks "the romance of modern life is to be found in an office." Mr. Waugh writes with awful speed, three thousand words a day three days a week, and on the other three days he works in a publishing house. Also on his literary days, he usually goes to a movie in the afternoon, plays football on Saturdays, is a keen cricketer, and dances enthusiastically about once a week.

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Double pneumonia drove **GERALD BEAUMONT** to writing fiction. He was for years a sporting editor, and then did publicity work until laid up by illness. His doctor warned him against office work after that, so in desperation he essayed short stories for the magazines. And he has never had a story rejected. "Riders Up" is his latest volume.

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J. C. SNAITH, on the other hand, attributes his start as a novelist to a broken leg, achieved as a boy in a football game. He began writing to lighten the tedium of waiting for a bone to knit. The latest result of that long ago accident is "The Van Roon." Snaith is a Yorkshireman. He is of opinion that America is getting a little ahead of England in the art of writing novels, and that women are doing a shade better than men at it; Edith Wharton he considers "the most completely accomplished novelist at present using the English language."

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The thirteen-year-old son of **ZANE GREY** at present is intending to follow in father's footsteps as a novelist, and spends many anxious hours blackening paper to that end. His mother reports that he has one article or story finished, and wants her to correct it, under the impression that afterward he need only send the story to a magazine, and a fat check will ensue immediately.

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Various readers have supposed that "Mary Lee" must have been written by a woman, and that "GEOFFREY DENNIS" is a pseudonym. But it is the author's real name. Mr. Dennis served in the war as captain, took a first at Oxford in history, and is at present head of the English section of the translation bureau of the League of Nations. He comes of an old Devonshire family, with numerous admirals among his ancestors. "Mary Lee" was written for amusement, and mainly in the trenches while the war was going on. A good deal of it was dictated to a soldier who could write shorthand. Writing in the first person, and trying to think the thoughts of a young woman was part of the "stunt." It came out better than the author expected, so after the war he sent it to the publisher and it was accepted.

The Macmillan Company announce with pride that they have authors from forty-three states on their list. New York State supplies the largest number by far. And of course they have a lot of English authors, too.

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MISS MAUDE ROYDEN, who has just had published a little book, a printed sermon entitled "Women at the World's Cross-Roads," is a very popular preacher in England, and though not ordained by the Anglican Church she is a member of it. She is included in the personalities in "Painted Windows."

The Golden Prime

By Hunter Stagg

HASSAN: A Play. By James Elroy Flecker. Alfred A. Knopf.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free, in the silken sail of infancy, the tide of time flow'd back with me, the forward flowing tide of time; and many a sheeny summer morn, adown the Tigris I was borne, by Bagdad's shrines of fretted gold, high walled gardens, green and old; true Mussulman was I and sworn, for it was in the golden prime of good Haroun Alraschid. . . .

So one Alfred, Lord Tennyson, several decades ago; and so, more lately and after a fashion of his own, James Elroy Flecker, than whom neither Brooke nor Middleton was more regretted when, seven years ago, he died on the threshhold of his real work. So, too, in effect, the authors of various other plays, not to mention Russian ballets and novels—even Meredith, it will be remembersd, once dipped his brush in the colors of the Arabian Nights to paint "The Shaving of Shagpat." But Mr. Flecker's work, being a play, escapes comparison with that gorgeous fantasy, and—though it has never, I believe, been seen upon the stage and probably never will be—falls more properly in line with the well recalled "Kismet" and "Omar the Tentmaker." And while it is neither so good as the one nor so bad as the other still . . . The fourscore windows all alight as with the quintessence of flame, a million tapers flaring bright from twisted silvers look'd to shame the hollow-vaulted dark, and streamed upon the mooned domes aloof in inmost Bagdad, till there seemed hundreds of crescents on the roo of night new-risen, that marvelous time, to celebrate the golden prime of good Haroun Alraschid.

Though "Hassan" is a prose work Mr. Flecker was first and foremost a poet, and so, from the viewpoint of a reader at least, did not have to be a remarkable dramatist. What this posthumous book of his may lack as a play it more than makes up in its beauty of thought and expression, and the time-dimmed violence of its imagery. Barring the interventions of the Genii all the materials of the Arabian Nights are there, collected about the figure of the lowly confectioner of Bagdad whom love drew into one of those mad, swift adventures of that Caliph who so dearly liked to wander in disguise, at night, through the mysterious streets of his city.

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. . . Then stole I up, and trancedly gaz'd on the Persian girl alone, serene with argent-lidded eyes amorous, and lashes like to rays of darkness, and a brow of pearl tressed with redolent ebony, in many a dark delicious curl, flowing beneath her rose-hued zone; the sweetest lady of the time, well worthy of the prime of good Haroun Alraschid. . . . Yes, yes, it is true that the author of "Hassan" fell into the common error of all Western peoples who write of the East, the error of placing too great an importance upon women—that is, upon the psychology of women—a thing no Oriental would dream of doing. They know out there that women are not, as women, interesting, but merely attractive, whereas this knowledge is withheld from the Western world, which is ridden by the superstition that it is necessary to understand women. Than this superstition I know nothing more ridiculous, for of course the real value of women to a man is the means they afford him of finding out interesting things about himself; and he should leave off doing that no later than the age of twenty-five, by which time, if he has used his leisure well, he has learned all that it is good for him to know about himself.

After twenty-five a man should, of course, be even more careful than ever about recognizing women for what they are—agreeable, even indispensable, companions, but as a sex no more worth understanding than himself. On this side of the world, however, we seem unable to achieve such an attitude, and especially in our literature is a great pother about the psychology of women, and a great struggling to penetrate into mysterious depths and recesses. The many good men who have devoted their lives to this work without even suspecting their right to demand a similar effort on the part of women! True, there are now, in our literature, signs of such an awakening among men, but even so we are far from the admirable understanding of the Oriental, failing which no tale of Eastern life written by a Westerner can be wholly successful. Hassan himself, for example, would in reality have been the first to laugh and tell Mr. Flecker not to bother so much about the vicious Yasmin, that it only mattered that she was beautiful; and Rafi, another slave of love, would have similarly advised him in his drawing of the luscious Pervaneh. Still, both these ladies are the excuse for much exquisite writing, and, in any case, . . .

. . . Six columns, three on either side, pure silver, underdropt a rich throne of the massive ore, from which down-drop'd, in many a floating fold, engarlanded and diaper'd with inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold. Thereon, his deep eye laughter stirr'd with merriment of kingly pride, sole star of all that place of time, I saw him—in his golden prime, the Good Haroun Alraschid.

"The Love Legend"

By Bernadine Szold

THE LOVE LEGEND. By Woodward Boyd. Scribners.

WOODWARD BOYD, who is still in her early twenties, has accomplished a definite place among the young writers of America when she wrote "The Love Legend." It is a fascinating story; she tells it with ease and grace; it scarcely ever sags, and most of all, it is disconcertingly objective and penetrating.

First novels are always discounted to some degree, simply because they are first novels. Woodward Boyd apparently was born with an intuitive sense of form, for, although she does not follow any traditional set of precepts, her book has no ragged edges, it is clean and finished—a delightful satisfaction. There are many clever passages, not a little scintillant dialogue, and an impressive poise that suggests much quiet wisdom.

The story is one of four romances. Four girls had been taught that love comes in the form of a Prince Charming riding a snow-while charger, and carries away the sweet, pure, innocent maiden, who has spent her life keeping her eyes cast down, so no wicked man would dare try to kiss her, unless he wanted to marry her.

As the girls, each so different temperamentally, each searching for diametrically opposed channels of expression, get out into the world, they find that the inevitable contacts with reality tear away some of the chaste coverings of the love legend.

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The four girls are sisters. Anita, Ward, Dizzy (for Elizabeth) and Sari, whose theatrical accomplishments demanded a more exotic appellation than the rather old-maidish Sarah, which she had been christened. Nita, the oldest, wanted to be an artist, and sold a few posters eventually. She "took up science," and the encounters with her practitioner, related utterly without sarcasm or irony, a verbatim repetition of scores of just such conversations that one hears on the train or in the cars, is one of the most delectable bits in the story. Nita marries successfully and acquires motors, a country place and a perfect background for the expression of her inherent smugness. The love legend of tradition she found quite compatible with her desires.

Sari, in whom one is greatly interested, secretly gets a job with the Carlotta Wilson dancers at a North Shore hotel. She simply walks away from home and a mother so impossible that she is not quite convincing, takes a studio and proceeds to live her own life. She is a free soul, which she proves by paying her own check at the restaurant and sitting up all night on the cement steps overlooking Lake Michigan with Cecil Howe De Jonghe, newly arrived from St. Louis, to whom she never was properly introduced. He means to work his way through the musical conservatory and be a great artist. Somehow, they find themselves married before they actually realize what has happened. They have two babies in two years, and starve most of the time.

Texas Flynn, who runs the Custard Pie Club, which every Chicagoan knows as the Dill Pickle, takes Sari and Cecil in and arranges quarters for them on the second floor of the ramshackle building up an alley off Dearborn Street, where a pot pourri of art, the revolution, birth control, sex and race problems served semi-weekly to university students, pseudo Bohemians, a few of the real vintage, sensation-seeking morons, radicals, fanatics and much besmocked maidens, who vie with each other for laurels in scalps and the length of cigarette holders. Sari acted in the plays that were put on in the tiny futuristic auditorium. Dizzy and Ward attended one of the meetings, and later went with Sari and the chosen few Custard Pies to a basement rendezvous in North Side Turner Hall.

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Instead of proposing a toast to Ward, whose flowerlike face was the involuntary magnet for every pair of male eyes, Raleigh Minster, a young orator for the Movement, passed a slip of paper on which each member of the party was requested to write his opinion of Ward. "The girls reluctantly wrote stupid things, the men extravagant things," Woodward Boyd relates, and adds that Ward was bored by what she considered a vulgar performance. Well, I was at that party, and I was rather agonized, I remember, at being forced to say something nice. I don't remember what I wrote finally, but I'm glad after several years to know that it must have touched Peggy Smith's sense of humor, and that it didn't turn her head, as some one suggested.

Dizzy goes through the University of Chicago, gets a job on a newspaper, all of which is intriguingly told, becomes an out and out liberal, falls in love with Jim Howells and finally gives him up because he disagrees with her ideas and ideals.

Of Ward herself, and her desperate search for fulfillment of the love legend, there is no solution presented other than the shattering one by one of the treacherous traditions of her love legend, which for years she had carried before her so gayly, like colored balloons, atop slender strings, straining in the wind. From their torn and crumpled husks, with the wisdom of her pain, she left the book—sturdily erecting a serene and unafraid philosophy of life and love.

Lady Susan Fownley, author of "The Indiscretions of Lady Susan."

An Average Man

ROLAND WHATELY. By Alec Waugh. Macmillan.

THE most elusive thing in the world is an average man. He must exist somewhere because he is continually being talked about, but it is almost impossible to discover him. In the character of Roland Whately we seem to have come about as close to an average Englishman of the upper middle class as it is reasonable ever to expect to. We pursue the fairly even tenor of his way and see him through the few difficulties, successes and love affairs that would naturally fall to the lot of the ordinary human being. Then we leave him abruptly when he is about to become interesting. We are genuinely sorry to leave him, however, and that is something in his favor.

A description of Roland sounds something like a "want ad": Young man, honest, capable, industrious and ambitious. Moreover, he has the essentially British characteristics of reticence and a love of fair play. The most important of all his accomplishments is his ability at cricket, and this game has a greater influence on his history than anything else. Life is pleasant for him generally, and he sails through it with an easy acceptance of all its bounty. Only twice does he encounter situations that demand resistance on his part—first, when his parents try to force him into a position in the bank of which his father is manager and he is determined to take a less safe opportunity, but one with wider scope; and second, when he resolves to marry the daughter of his employer rather than the girl to whom he had been more or less engaged all his life.

Whether this last decision is due more to the desire to choose his wife for himself rather than to the promptings of a greater affection is uncertain. The reader is left with a feeling that he did not have a consuming passion for either one, and that he would probably have been quite as happy with one as the other. His emotions are genuine, but not uncomfortably deep. Whichever girl he had married, one knows that he will be in for moments of sentimental regret that she is not the other. He is that kind.

He's really a nice boy, Roland. Not too clever and a bit apt to get into a scrape because of his habit of saying the thing which he believes the moment requires—like taking one's cue on the stage—but his is precisely what the average young man does in his place.

London Letter

By Douglas Goldring

"ADVENTURES IN BOLIVIA," by Mr. C. H. Prodgers, which Mr. John Lane has recently published, is, I think, without any exception the most enthralling travel book which has come my way during the last ten years. Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham is not the man to recommend a fraud, particularly one relating to the continent of South America, and since the volume has an introduction by him we can safely accept it at its face value. Says Mr. Graham: "This book, that exudes sincerity just as a pine tree drops its resin, serves a double purpose. It reveals a curious personality that might have stepped straight from the pages of Purchas or of Hakluyt and at the same time, all unknown to the writer, helps to dispel some of the mist of ignorance and prejudice that for so long has hung over the lives and actions of the Spanish conquerors. . . . Written in the language that men speak around the camp fire, with rifles ready to the hand, with ears attuned to catch the slightest rustle in the grass and eyes always awatch upon the horses where they feed close at hand, hobbled or picketed, it lets fresh air in on the question. The writer tells us bluntly and in the way a sailor writes his logbook, quite without comment, but with cincumstance, that he slept in an ancient Inca temple on some pass or other of an altitude of 17,000 feet and with a temperature of eight degrees below. He lifts unwittingly the corner of a page that Protestant historians have always kept dogs-eared."

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Mr. Prodgers tells us that his weight before he started on his adventures was nineteen stone, and that his normal occupation was that of training horses. (He has probably never suspected himself of being a romantic figure, and that is what lends his book one of its greatest charms.) He undertook, nevertheless, when the suggestion was made to him, to visit a land from which no white man had safely returned since 1845. His main object was to obtain certain rubber concessions, for which he was to receive £10,000, but he also had his eye upon some hidden treasure supposed to be waiting there for any one who could find it. Through sheer bad luck he was not successful in either quest. But he went to places not to be found on the map, where the native Indian rules his own roost and does not encourage English visitors. Of three white men who went on an earlier expedition to this territory, one had his hands and feet cut off and was thrown into a river, and another was beheaded. Mr. Prodgers had several narrow escapes and once was very nearly poisoned by some Indians. But he fortunately survived to tell one of the most remarkable adventure stories of the present century.

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I have been wondering how long it would be before one of the young of our young critics would rediscover Tennyson. Now, at last, Mr. Harold Nicholson, who recently gave us an excellent critical study of Verlaine, has done it. Tennyson is not to be read at any more. True, there are one or regrettable incidents in his "Collected Poems," but he knew his job, and a lyric poet there are no spots on Alfred. Every intelligent reader of average critical acumen has arrived at this profound truth long ago, and taken it for granted. But critics do not often write for intelligent readers. Their job is to lead the fashions. "Tennyson Green" will probably be the rage next year.

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The great d'Annunzio is to come to London in a few weeks' time, perhaps to arrange for the translation and production of his new light comedy, "Amaranda." I do not know whether he has many English friends but the admirable institution, the Pen Club, will doubtless try to secure him as the guest of honor at its next dinner.

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The first number of Mr. T. S. Eliot's new quarterly review "The Criterion" is in the bookshops. It contains a paper called "Dullness," by Professor George Saintsbury; a "plan of a novel" by Dostorevski, which Mr. S. S. Koteliansky and Mrs. Virginia Woolf have translated, and other contributions by T. S. Eliot, May Sinclair, Hermann Hesse ("German Poetry of To-day"), and Valery Larbaud ("Ulysses"). M. Larbaud's already famous review of James Joyce's masterpiece will be read with much interest by those who did not see the Paris periodical in which it first appeared. A new edition of "Ulysses" is, by the way, now being announced. It will be issued by the Casanova Society at the comparatively moderate price of two guineas and will be in two volumes. The original edition, owing to its bulk, is a most unpleasant book to handle and the sooner it gets into the libraries of "bibliophiles" (who rarely have time for reading) the better. I have made haste to dispose of my own copy for a satisfactory profit!

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It is curious how many good English writers have received their first real encouragement from the American public. George Moore pays America a warm tribute, I notice, in his preface to the first volume of the Carra edition of his works. And D. H. Lawrence, I fancy, is more interested in his American than in his English audience. Ford Madox Hueffer tells me that he is publishing his new novel in the United States and is not "bothering about England" at all. For many English writers, particularly those who for some reason or another have put up the backs of the reviewing clique, America is the land of promise where they have a reasonable chance of getting a "square deal." The spites and jealousies which may injure a man in his own country don't go a rule get across the Atlantic. And that is something to be thankful for.